

Resource Contact: Policy/Technical Support
Section

Effective Date: 12/19/94
Revised: NEW

References: Chapter 90.03 RCW, Chapter 90.44 RCW

Purpose: To provide a simple, consistent response to water right related issues when considering the use of saltwater. For the purposes of this policy, seawater has the same meaning as saltwater.

Application: This policy applies to all water resource staff when responding to inquiries or inspecting diversions or withdrawals of saltwater from a marine water body.

POLICY FOR THE DIVERSION OR WITHDRAWAL OF SALTWATER

1. At this time, a water right permit under Chapter 90.03 or Chapter 90.44 RCW will not be required for the diversion/withdrawal of saltwater from a marine water body.

State jurisdiction exists for the appropriation of saltwater from a marine water body. However, the withdrawal and use of saltwater is relatively new and limited in the state of Washington. Because of this, no allocation plan has been developed for the use of saltwater. Ecology will not require a permit for this type of diversion or withdrawal at this time.

2. Water users must be advised to take extreme care to protect against the induction of saltwater into fresh water aquifers.

If a below ground withdrawal facility is planned, it must be constructed seaward of the mean low low water elevation, and be shallow in depth. The information concerning water elevation can be obtained from the Washington State Tidal Datum Plane Book. Water users should be advised to consult with Ecology's Water Division prior to beginning construction of the project.

3. State jurisdiction exists for enforcement against contamination of an aquifer due to saltwater intrusion.

When the use of saltwater is determined to be detrimental to the public interest, Ecology may enforce to protect public health, interest, and the safety of the environment.



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